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Settling in the United States: Advice for New Immigrants

By: Hal Salazar

The United States welcomes more than [one million immigrants](#) each year according to Pew Research Center, with the majority of them coming from China, India, Mexico, and the Philippines. And while many programs and services are available to assist immigrants as they adjust to life in America, several types of information are often left out — like how immigrants can support loved ones back home, start a small business, and connect with their new community. The [National Alliance to Nurture the Aged and the Youth](#) explains more about adjusting to life in America, personally and professionally.

Support Loved Ones Back Home

You may have immigrated to the United States, but chances are you still have family, friends, and other loved ones back home. And fortunately, it's possible to connect with and support these loved ones from afar. Here are some ways to do it:

- **Offer financial support.** [The Federal Trade Commission](#) (FTC) shares information on sending money overseas, including the taxes and fees involved. Exchange rates vary, but several affordable and reputable money transfer services include Remitly, Wise, and OFX.
- **Use calling and messaging apps** To communicate with your loved ones back home, you can make free international calls using apps such as Google Duo, WeChat, Facebook Messenger, LINE, or Skype.
- **Send care packages.** Mail care packages to your family back home. Include toys, school supplies, hygiene products, vegetable seeds for planting, and photos to share with your loved ones.

Connect With Your New Community

In addition to keeping in touch with your loved ones back home, it's important to connect with your new community and meet other people living in the U.S. Start by [looking for jobs](#), volunteer opportunities, and other [ways to support](#) your local community. You'll meet new people, gain essential skills, improve your English language skills, and learn the American way much more easily. [English classes](#) are another great way to meet people as a new immigrant, and some are available free of charge.

Start Your Own Small Business

If you're interested in [starting a business](#) as a new immigrant to the U.S., John Boitnott of Self Financial offers some tips on making it happen. You could even start a business that helps residents of your home country. Some organizations, for instance, bring clean water to those living in developing countries — using sustainable water filters, water treatments, and sanitation and hygiene products. Business opportunities are also available if you're interested in becoming a distributor of these products.

Regardless of the type of business you're starting, it's important to learn the ins and outs of how to start a business. First, you'll need to determine how your business will be legally structured, whether that's a corporation or an LLC. Then you'll need to come up with a name for your business, register and file with the state, and secure an EIN (Employer ID Number) with the IRS. Once all the documents are in order, you're able to open your doors and begin your marketing efforts.

If your dream is to eventually open your own business but you feel like you need to learn more before taking the leap, consider earning a business degree. An online degree program allows

you to [manage coursework](#) in a way that fits your schedule, and this makes it easy to work to grow your income.

Adjust to Life in the U.S.

It'll take some time to adjust to life in the United States but immersing yourself in American culture will allow you to settle in much more easily. Start by learning the English language, chatting with your new neighbors whenever possible, volunteering in the community, taking public transportation, and looking for employment opportunities. The more you can do to connect with your new community, the better!

And while you will be starting a new life in America, you can still maintain positive relationships with your loved ones back home. Calling and messaging apps can be used to call, text, and video chat with your friends and family, or you can use money transfer services to offer financial support. Connecting with your new community is important, but so too is maintaining bonds with the loved ones in your home country.